

Age no bar to buying illicit programs

SHOPS in a well-known Kowloon arcade were yesterday willing to sell "computerised pornography" to a 17-year-old schoolboy for prices ranging from \$30 to \$650.

During a two-hour visit to the maze of shops on two levels of the Golden Plaza arcade in Shamshuipo, the boy visited 11 shops, five of which asked no questions about his age, readily quoted him prices and told him what he could get for his money.

An assistant at New World Software explained: "Basically they're movies. Some are film clips. Some of the others move. Some are half movies, half clips."

The assistant at the shop on the first floor called the program up on his screen to show the boy it contained

two of the titles he had been told to ask for.

Asked how long he would have to wait to get the program, the boy was told: "Immediately, if you have 16 HD [high density] disks we can make copies right now. The whole lot [a program with 22 titles] will cost you \$250."

The shop offered programs from Japan, the United States and Hongkong.

Blank disks in the arcade cost between \$5 and \$9, depending on quality.

Another shop, Top Games, also on the first floor, offered 13 HD disks for \$230.

The one shop which offered the porn on ordinary disks, Data P.O. in the basement, said they only had the "Hongkong version", con-

sisting of six disks at \$30 apiece.

Again, the boy was not asked his age, or if he had the cash to make a purchase.

The most expensive shop was one aptly named CASII, in the basement. The shop assistant said they had two programs on offer.

One consisted of 18 HD disks for \$450 and the other 26 HD disks for \$650.

However, the boy felt certain he was handicapped because he did not have the "password" for the digital porn.

Having to explain what he wanted made several of the shop people nervous, he said.

None of the myriad of shops in the arcade, where corridors are no more than a 1½ metres wide, was openly

displaying the disks, or even hinting they had them for sale.

Shop assistants had to be asked, and some said they had no idea what the boy was after.

South China Morning Post inquiries at the same shops which had offered to sell the boy tapes, turned up blanks.

The same New World Software shop assistant who had called the program up on the screen for the boy said: "We don't sell these things. It's illegal and we don't deal in it."

The assistant at Top Games denied they had any porno disks for sale and added: "We don't do copying. We haven't even got the equipment to make copies."